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ABSTRACT

New state laws and regulations designed to improve teacher quality are described in this policy brief. The new policies represent eight strategies for dealing with teaching quality issues: testing and screening; teacher compensation; preservice training and certification; staff development; enhanced management and supervision; teacher job redefinition; worker organization; and school-culture improvement. The first four types focus on improving individual teachers, and the second four focus on improving the organizational characteristics of schools. It is concluded that school productivity depends greatly on the creation of a robust organizational culture, which is characterized by a shared set of attitudes, beliefs, values, and expectations. High performance teaching can only be facilitated, not coerced. Briefs of the policies implemented in Utah (Michael Murphy and Douglas E. Mitchell), Nevada (Myrna Matranga and Douglas E. Mitchell), California (Douglas E. Mitchell), and Arizona (Robert T. Stout and Douglas E. Mitchell) are attached. (LMI)

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POLICY BRIEFS

NUMBER ONE

STATE POLICY STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY

Douglas E. Mitchell

State policymakers are caught in a squeeze between strong demands for improved teacher quality and increasingly severe teacher shortages. The result is an unprecedented outpouring of new laws and regulations. Some are minor, marginally adjusting teacher credentialing or working conditions. Others alter the very foundations of teaching work — changing job definitions, compensation plans and supervision systems.

The new policies represent eight distinctive strategies for dealing with teaching quality issues — strategies that make sharply divergent assumptions about both the nature of the problem and the criteria for judging its solution. Systematic consideration of the entire set is essential for development of an integrated teacher quality improvement program. Teaching quality will not be raised very much by simply turning up the heat on individual teachers or by haphazardly adopting add on programs that make piecemeal changes in their training, selection, or working conditions.

THE POLICY OPTIONS

Of the eight strategic options for improving teacher quality, four focus on the characteristics and capabilities of individual teachers; the other four primarily address the organizational characteristics of schools.

IMPROVING INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS

Policy options for dealing with individual teachers include:

1. **Testing and screening.** During the late 1970s and early 1980s many states adopted competency tests for teachers. By 1984, 26 states required teachers to take tests prior to certification. Nine more states plan to have tests in place by 1987. Most are strictly basic skills tests, but a few seek to assess professional knowledge. The timing of these tests also varies — some come only at the end of training, some before admission to train-

ing, some are required whenever teachers change assignments, and some affect only new recruits.

2. **Teacher compensation.** Looming teacher shortages and recent data on just how far teacher salaries have fallen below those paid to comparably trained workers are prompting new policies to raise salary levels or change the form of payment for teacher services. There are two competing approaches: one assumes that salaries serve primarily to attract workers into an occupation; the other assumes that salaries should be used to control work performance by linking compensation to productivity. Policymakers who adopt the first view generally concentrate on raising the overall level of teacher salaries — some focusing only on starting salaries while others look at the pattern of compensation over an entire teaching career. Those who want pay tied closely to productivity urge the development of merit- or performance-based pay systems and emphasize linking wage levels to teacher evaluation.
3. **Pre-service training and certification.** Most states established well defined teacher certification programs early in the 20th century. During the 1960s, attention again focused on teacher training. Some states adopted fifth-year programs; there was a general rejection of methods courses in favor of academic training; and competency based programs were developed on the assumption that essential teaching skills can be disaggregated and taught separately.
4. **Staff development.** Professional staff development programs began a period of rapid growth during the late 1970s, following publication of seminal research showing that school program changes are much more likely to succeed if teachers become directly involved in planning — modifying and adapting program elements to fit individual schools and classrooms. In many states staff development policies supported a veritable army of training consultants; in some they led to the creation of permanent training centers. Over the last decade the training emphasis shifted from classroom management and instructional techniques, toward lesson structure and curriculum content, especially in mathematics, science and computer literacy.

Differences among the policy options directed toward individual teacher improvement are closely linked to two critical questions about how best to pursue this goal. The first question asks whether improvement is more likely to flow from enhanced teacher *motivation* or from closer *regulation* of their activities. There is substantial tension between policy options offering motivational support and encouragement to teachers — compensation plans and staff development programs — and those attempting to regulate entry into the profession and insure that only qualified individuals are allowed to teach — pre-service training and competency testing.

The second critical question underlying the four teacher-oriented policy options is whether it is more important to modify the *subjective thinking* of teachers or to reshape the *objective conditions* of their work. Again, two of the policy options — competency testing and incentive compensation — address objective conditions while pre-service training and staff development concentrate on teacher thinking. The two strategic questions interact to form the four cells of Figure 1.

IMPROVING SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to addressing the thinking and behavior of individuals, state policies can be used to improve teaching by altering the school systems within which teachers work.

5. **Enhanced management and supervision.** Research on the roles played by principals suggests new policies for improving teacher performance through aggressive management and supervision. Generally aimed at stronger instructional

leadership, these policies include leadership academies, teacher evaluation mandates and revision of administrative credential programs.

6. **Teacher job redefinition.** The fact that teaching is an occupation with an almost totally flat career structure is increasingly important in discussions of quality improvement. Ambitious teachers must leave the classroom for administrative posts or leave the schools altogether in order to gain recognition and compensation at increasingly higher levels. Further, teachers get little formal support or assistance from their peers and often find the workplace lonely and frustrating.

Research on effective organizations supports the concept of teacher career ladders to differentiate status and authority levels for teachers, giving responsibility to abler teachers to support and supervise less experienced or less able colleagues. Policymakers see career ladder programs as a way to inspire high quality teaching performance by teachers seeking promotion to higher ranks, and to discourage poor teachers from staying in the profession.

7. **Worker organization.** During the 1950s and 1960s both teachers and legislators in a majority of the states came to believe that stronger teacher unions would mean more effective teaching in the schools. Teacher organizers were most confident of this link between unionization and quality, believing that teacher power

would mean powerful teaching. Though 37 states have statutory language supporting some form of teacher organization, only two states adopted such laws after 1980. While no states have repealed collective bargaining, a number altered teacher working conditions in ways that run counter to the assumptions of traditional labor law.

8. **School culture improvement.** Recent studies of unusually effective schools highlight the importance of subtle and complex attitudes and beliefs in affecting teacher work performance. The terms culture or ethos summarize

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Figure 1. Teacher Quality Improvement Policies
Aimed at Changing Individual Teacher Characteristics

	Regulation of Teaching	Motivation of Teachers
Shaping the External Conditions Affecting Teachers	1. TEACHER COMPETENCY TESTING	2. COMPENSATION INCENTIVES
Shaping the Subjective Thinking Processes of Teachers	3. PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION	4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**Figure 2. Teacher Quality Improvement Policies
Aimed at Changing School Systems**

	Regulation of Teaching	Motivation of Teachers
Changing the External Conditions Affecting Teachers	5. STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION	6. REDEFINE TEACHER WORK ROLES
Affecting the Subjective Thinking Processes of Teachers	7. RECOGNIZE TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS	8. IMPROVE SCHOOL CULTURES

this aspect of effective schools, and serious efforts are increasingly directed toward the development of high performance school cultures. Peer leadership programs and comprehensive school improvement policies are giving explicit attention to overall teacher attitudes and expectations. And a wide variety of administrative programs, ranging from clinical supervision to assertive discipline, are being implemented to create school climates that elicit high performances from students and teachers.

Differences among the strategic policy options focused on school organizations spring from the same two basic questions about how best to improve teaching quality that lie behind the policies directed toward individual teachers. The tension between regulation and motivation is most clearly visible in the gap between the accountability focus of management and supervision policies, and the teacher support emphasis found in efforts to strengthen school culture. Stronger supervision systems and redefined teacher jobs structure external conditions; participation in worker organizations and the improvement of school cultures operate primarily through their effects on teacher beliefs and attitudes.

CHOOSING AMONG POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The choice among strategic policy options is complicated by lack of agree-

ment about the nature of the teacher quality problem itself. Current debates involve very different conceptions of the teacher quality problem, and policies developed with one definition in mind generally fail to address major issues raised by competing views. The most prevalent and disturbing interpretation links poor teaching to declines in achievement test scores. The Commission on Excellence emphasized this view when it proclaimed that the nation has committed an act of "unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament."

Those who see achievement decline as the primary reason for reform are most attracted to policy options that emphasize individual teacher improvement — competency testing, incentive pay, better pre-service training, and staff development. These options share in common a belief that school systems are essentially sound and would perform well if more qualified teachers could be induced to work harder and more skillfully.

A very different conception of the teacher quality problem dominates the thinking of policymakers whose attention is drawn to the rapidly growing shortage of qualified teachers in the schools. With shortages projected to reach 80,000 teachers per year by 1993, and real salaries shrinking, fewer young people identify teaching as a desirable career, and currently employed teachers are expressing more interest in leaving the profession. Those who see teacher shortage as the paramount problem prefer policy options that address

motivation, such as better compensation, improved staff development, expanded teacher job definitions and strengthened school cultures.

A third perspective is that teachers and teaching are affected by social change and demography. Public schools are serving increasing numbers of language minority children; handicapped children are mainstreamed into regular classes; single parents have less time to participate in the schools; and children with working mothers have after-school child care needs. Different families have varying expectations of what schools should accomplish for their children. However, politically active middle-class families effectively press their own demands, limiting a school's ability to provide for alternative expectations. Those who see teacher improvement from this perspective emphasize policy options for improving teacher subjective thinking processes — pre-service training, staff development, worker organization and school culture improvement.

A fourth view of the teacher quality problem links education to the maintenance of a strong national economy — a vital component of national security. Current anxiety about the state of the national economy is at an all-time high. Unlike other perspectives, however, this view only increases the pressure for action without focusing attention on particular policy options. There are no clear links between the various approaches to teacher quality improvement and enhancement of this nation's international market position.

Which definition of the teacher quality problem is most accurate? Which of the available strategies is most effective? No single definition is entirely right, and no one strategy works by itself. Moreover, positive support for improved teacher quality generated by one policy can be easily negated by inadequate or inappropriate use of another. If teacher compensation is manipulated in order to motivate individual teachers who continue to work in a destructive school climate or have incompetent management, little improvement can be expected. By the same token, high quality management and good school climates can only go so far in overcoming poor training or low wages.

School productivity depends heavily on the creation of a robust organizational culture, a shared set of attitudes, values, and beliefs that enable individuals to know what is expected of them and to

discover uncontrived ways of collaborating in complex tasks. School cultures are both difficult to develop and quite fragile. Aggressive policy changes almost always produce disruption and disorganization during initial implementation. This means that high performance teaching can only be facilitated; it cannot be coerced or commanded. Hence education policymakers face a fundamental dilemma — if they try too hard to control teaching quality they will only succeed in disrupting it. ■

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Under its current federal contract the Far West Laboratory is undertaking a major new Policy Support Services Program (PSSP). The primary mission of the new program is to assist state policymakers throughout the Western Region (AZ, CA, NV and UT) in finding and interpreting high quality, research-based policy data, and to assist them in identifying and analyzing strategic policy options for improving school performance.

The four core activities planned for the PSSP are:

1. Provide analysis and disseminate information on critical education policy issues. This work includes development of policy "white papers" on major issues and the preparation of several short Policy Briefs on topics of broad interest. Staff will also provide direct consultation and cooperative state education policy seminars.
2. Generate a feedback system to track the impact of particular state policies.

In conjunction with other laboratory research and service work, PSSP will zero in on two or three key policy questions each year to help state level decision-makers develop a better understanding of how current policies actually affect school operations.

3. Monitor and interpret policy relevant data sets that provide leading indicators of school performance.

Following pilot work and feasibility studies planned for the first year, the laboratory will develop and monitor specific school system performance indicators.

4. Assist in linking policy research and analysis agencies throughout the region with specific policy problems and needs.

A census of policy research agencies and capacities in the region will be followed by assistance in developing ties between state policymaker needs and identified support capabilities.

The PSSP staff is decentralized. The Director is located in San Francisco, but field agents are located in the capital cities of Arizona, Nevada and Utah. The staff includes: Dr. Douglas E. Mitchell, Dr. Michael Murphy, Dr. Myrna Matranga and Dr. Robert T. Stout.

Improving Teacher Quality In Utah

Michael Murphy
and
Douglas E. Mitchell

Education policy in Utah is deeply influenced by special circumstances of the state's demography, economics and political history. The population in Utah is growing rapidly, but the pace of economic growth is only moderate. The mismatch between population and economic growth is so large that it threatens the state's capacity to provide governmental services at a reasonable tax cost. Thus, while Utah ranks among the top three states in terms of per capita tax effort devoted to education, low per capita income and a large proportion of children in the population have combined to produce the lowest per pupil expenditure in the nation. Teacher salaries, which until this year kept pace with the national average, are slipping and class size is the highest in the country.

This picture has actually been getting worse in recent years. Twenty years ago, per capita income in Utah was 88 percent of the national average. In 1984 it slipped to 76 percent. The decline is caused largely by the youthfulness of the state's population — the average age is the lowest of the 48 contiguous states — and by a general shift in the economy from mining and steel production to high technology and service industries which have lower wage contours.

Although there is deep concern for the future of education, there is more optimism and less of a sense of crisis in Utah than might be found under similar circumstances in other states. This is due in large part to a strong tradition of utopian, populist and family centered values brought to the state's culture and government by early Mormon settlers. Education is highly valued in Utah's underlying culture and receives substantial attention by policymakers interested in improving overall teacher quality. Most policy leaders seem resigned, however, to the fact that they can do little in the near future to increase the fiscal capa-

city of the state or to fund the schools more handsomely. They turn increasingly, therefore, to consideration of policies that emphasize productivity enhancement and develop new systems of educational service delivery.

In 1983, the governor appointed an Education Reform Steering Committee to collect reform ideas and propose a reform package for the 1984 legislative session. At about the same time, the Utah State Board of Education appointed a Commission on Educational Excellence to propose reforms. Reports by both of these policy advisory groups were released in November 1983. Recommendations contained in these reports served as the basis for virtually all important policy reforms during the last two years.

TEACHER JOB REDEFINITION

In response to the recommendations of reform commissions, Utah policymakers adopted in 1984 H.B. 110, providing for a career ladder program to make major changes in both compensation patterns and job responsibilities for teachers. Although other changes are seen as more basic by some observers, the job definition changes generated by the career ladder program are the most prominent feature of recent Utah policy. A case could reasonably be made for rating compensation system changes as more significant, but Utah is unique among western region states in its unequivocal endorsement of new teacher work roles.

The career ladder program is a district option, entitlement financed program. All 40 of the state's school districts chose to develop career ladder programs intended to create a system of differentiated work responsibilities for teachers and now receive funds. Teachers receiving career ladder promotions are expected to take on responsibilities or projects beyond normal classroom duties. The extra duties may include curriculum development, evaluation of novice teachers, serving as mentors for,

new teachers, or developing inservice programs.

COMPENSATION

While redefinition of teaching responsibilities is clearly a major goal of the career ladder legislation, it is accompanied by a substantial redesign of the teacher compensation system. In addition to funding teacher promotion up the steps of a career ladder, H.B. 110 allocated new funds to cover three other salary system changes.

1) Districts may extend the teacher's work year by adding non-teaching days to their contracts.

2) Districts must provide for a comprehensive, fair evaluation system to be used in awarding the additional pay associated with meritorious work performance and for placement of teachers on the ladder.

3) And beginning in 1985, at least 10 percent of the entitlement must be used as merit pay to reward teachers evaluated as meritorious.

District flexibility in using these funds is limited. At least half of each district's entitlement must go toward advancement on the career ladder for individual teachers and no more than half may be used to extend the contract year. The new funds provided to support these changes amount to about 13 percent of the annual teacher wage bill or about \$3,200 per teacher.

While there are significant variations across districts, most have used the funds to provide for about six days of extended contract employment for all teachers — near the maximum number allowable — and provide significant job enlargement or special project responsibilities for teachers placed on the career ladder. Merit or bonus payments are restricted to a mandated minimum of 10 percent.

EVALUATION AND SUPERVISION

A key feature of H.B. 110 was to mandate a comprehensive and fair evaluation

system for teachers. Districts are required to use evaluation techniques that employ multiple lines of evidence to build a composite teacher performance profile. Peers, students and sometimes parents are asked to provide evaluation data, along with more traditional administrator observations. The overall impact of this evaluation requirement is to encourage more intense supervision of teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, that teachers were initially reluctant to embrace the career ladder program. Most recently, however, all of the major education interest groups — School Boards Association, State Board of Education, all administrator organizations, the Utah Education Association and a host of others — endorsed a resolution calling for continuation of the career ladder program and allocation of an additional \$19 million for implementation of its third phase.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Utah uses competency-based standards for teacher and administrator certification. New standards now before the State Board of Education, however, focus less on competencies and more on process standards for approved programs. The new standards for teacher certification, for example, emphasize screening processes for admission to training programs, continuous evaluation of credential candidates, counseling and advisement during training, supervised field experiences developed cooperatively by universities and the public schools, and the collection of follow-up data on the performance of graduates once they acquire teaching positions.

Where there have been two teaching credentials, four are proposed: early childhood, elementary, middle and secondary. These certificates for age groups are in addition to those for special education, communicative disorders, student services and library

media. The proposed credential pattern would provide two levels of credentialing in each area. A basic credential issued on graduation, and a professional one awarded on recommendation of an employing school district, three or four years after receipt of the basic credential.

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL CULTURES

Though respect for local cultural values remains high, state level policy-makers in Utah are taking some fairly direct steps to improve educational productivity. State sponsored workshops on outcome based education, new graduation standards, core curriculum standards, and widespread public attention to issues of school reform all create a climate intended to focus the attention and efforts of local educators on effective school practices.

WORKER ORGANIZATION

Utah has no state statutes protecting the rights of teachers to organize or bargain over terms and conditions of employment. All 40 of the state's districts do engage in collective bargaining with their teachers, however, under the terms of a legal opinion by the Utah Attorney General. The absence of statutory protection keeps the bargaining process from becoming a powerful tool for resolving teacher quality issues since both teachers and local school boards fear that they would lose in any court test of the validity of the Attorney General's opinion.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Utah has no state sponsored program of professional or staff development for teachers. There are, of course, various local district efforts to support staff development, typically salary increases

based on the acquisition of additional training. Under proposed credentialing regulations, teachers would not acquire a permanent professional credential unless they gain expanded skills satisfactory to their employing district.

TEACHER TESTING

Utah has adopted no state-wide tests for teachers. Proposed credential changes do ask training institutions to establish specific standards for admission to training, and some institutions may well adopt a test as part of those standards. At the present time, however, the state sees no reason to use this policy mechanism as part of a general teacher quality improvement program.

IN SUM

The primary focus of recent policy in Utah is to use both fiscal and regulatory mechanisms to re-define teacher work roles and to improve the motivation of individual teachers. Interest in revising credential training and an expanded view of management responsibility for close supervision of teacher performance follow and support this primary focus.

The pattern of policy actions taken in this state suggests that Utahns assume that quality teaching is best reached by concentrating on changing the objective conditions of teachers rather than trying to modify their subjective thinking processes. Hence policymakers in this state give relatively little attention to staff development, school culture enhancement, and recognition of teacher organizations. Modification of teacher training programs rather than direct testing of teachers is an exception to this general framework for action. Testing and screening potential teachers, widely practiced in other states, is not used in Utah. ■

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Improving Teacher Quality In Nevada

Myrna Matranga
and
Douglas E. Mitchell

Nevada is characterized by diversity and a strong tradition of local autonomy within its 17 county school districts. The Las Vegas metropolitan area is served by the nation's 26th largest urban school system — Clark County School District. Both Clark and Washoe Counties are growing rapidly and give high priority to teacher recruitment. At the other end of the spectrum, remote Esmeralda County School District serves just 171 students spread over 3,570 square miles. Such geographical isolation creates equally severe, but very different, teacher recruitment and retention problems.

Nevada is facing a serious teacher shortage problem. Historically, about 70 percent of the state's teachers are hired from outside the state. Maintaining an adequate supply of qualified teachers is becoming increasingly difficult because the surrounding states are now offering higher salaries and fringe benefits. Since more than half of the Nevada teaching force is over 40 years of age the problem is likely to get worse in the near future.

TEACHER COMPENSATION

The most recent direct action on teacher quality improvement taken by Nevada was the addition of about \$103.4 million to the state's biennial budget in 1985. This provides for an average 11.5 percent increase in teacher salaries during the first year of the biennium, and an additional 4 percent during the second. Local districts had to negotiate with teacher organizations regarding the distribution of salary raises, but were encouraged to concentrate the funds on starting salaries for new teachers.

In addition to overall salary increases, Nevada created a program of retention bonuses to encourage teachers to remain in the profession. This program provides a one time payment amounting to 5 percent of base salary to teachers renewing contracts.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

The most prominent policy changes in non-fiscal areas resulted from a 1979 decision by the state legislature establishing a Professional Standards Commission to advise the State Board of Education on matters relating to teacher certification. As a result of their work, teacher training and certification policy changes are a major element in Nevada teacher improvement efforts.

In 1983, based on Commission recommendations, the State Board of Education adopted explicit standards for the approval of programs leading to teacher certification for the first time in the state's history. Ten basic standards were included in the policy; no fewer than six of them address issues linking teacher training to school experience. Two of the standards require teacher training faculty members to have school experience and to participate regularly in school-based activities. Three additional standards outline expectations for direct involvement by credential candidates in the schools. And one standard prescribes direct experience with particular student populations. Teacher preparation programs at the Reno and Las Vegas branches of the University of Nevada have been granted program approval under the new standards.

In response to the shortage problem, Nevada also enacted a regulation permitting emergency certification of teachers. Emergency credentials are allowed if: 1) the district provides evidence that it is unable to secure properly credentialled teachers, 2) the applicant holds a bachelor's degree in a subject area identified by the State Board as a shortage field, 3) a rationale for requesting the emergency credential is presented, and 4) the emergency credential holder enrolls in a special teacher training program designed by one of the state's colleges of education.

TEACHER COMPETENCY TESTING

The Professional Standards Commission also recommended, and the Board subsequently adopted, a teacher competency assessment program. The pre-professional skills test published by Educational Testing Service is used to assess a prospective teacher's knowledge of basic computation, reading and writing skills. In-state validation studies of this examination have been completed and a cut-off score and implementation date will soon be established by the State Board. Once that happens, all new teachers will be required to pass the exam prior to certification.

Subject-matter testing was also recommended by the Commission. State Department of Education staff are reviewing available tests in this area and planning validation studies.

Continued assessment of teachers after initial certification, and direct assessment of administrator competency to undertake teacher supervision and evaluation are also recommended. These testing programs are the responsibility of a series of locally developed Professional Development Centers.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Although no direct state-level support or regulations are provided, staff development is currently high on the list of local school district priorities and district-wide Professional Development Centers (PDCs) are being created. Douglas County School District provides leadership in the development of these PDCs, emphasizing formative and developmental training programs. Significant attention is given to training administrators as well as teachers.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT

A revision of certification regulations for school administrators is currently

being worked out by State Department of Education staff. It will almost certainly include specific attention to teacher supervision and evaluation skill development, and is likely to rely heavily on the PDC to deliver significant training.

TEACHER JOB REDEFINITION

Teacher job definition is not an explicit policy consideration in Nevada. However, some consideration of this issue has taken place within the informal study group working on Professional Development Centers. No formal state action has been taken (and none is pending) at the time of this review.

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL CULTURES

No direct state-level action is being contemplated in this area. It is widely recognized, however, that both policymakers and the public at large support a much stronger emphasis on instructional matters in the Nevada school system.

Educators are responding with careful study and are making local program and policy changes to realize this goal.

WORKER ORGANIZATION

Nevada adopted collective bargaining for teachers in 1969 and continues to operate under that statute to set salaries and working conditions. The only recent change in the collective bargaining statute (A.B. 50, 1985) includes a provision for three-year contracts for post-probationary employees who have obtained overall satisfactory evaluations.

IN SUM

Nevada schools are facing a serious teacher shortage problem. State policymakers see attracting adequate numbers of teachers and improving the capacity of those who are employed within the schools as matters of great importance. Recent policy actions concentrate on changing the personal characteristics of individual teachers rather than altering

the organizational environment of the schools within which they work. Pre-service training and staff development policy changes are intended to modify the orientation, attitudes and skills of individual teachers. Improved compensation is intended to attract larger numbers of qualified candidates and competency assessment processes are intended to screen out those who are not fully qualified.

The immediate future will include action in at least four areas: 1) ongoing assessment of the appropriateness of current certification regulations, especially a review of emergency certification; 2) refinement of subject matter tests for new teachers; 3) expansion of the Professional Development Center concept for staff development; and 4) a major effort to provide increased revenues to support teacher salary increases. ■

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Improving Teacher Quality In California

Douglas E. Mitchell

Two critical events of the 1970s fundamentally altered state level education policy in California. First was the series of landmark *Serrano v. Priest* decisions by the California Supreme Court (1971) which held that differences in wealth among local school districts in the state were unconstitutionally large, and forced the state to revise its system of finance. The second was the passage of the ballot initiative Proposition 13 (1978) which sharply reduced property tax rates and effectively eliminated discretionary taxing authority for most local government units.

Together these two actions sharply curtailed overall educational expenditures and exacerbated the ongoing drift of policymaking initiative from local to state level decisionmakers. By 1982, when the huge budget surplus cushioning the initial impact of Proposition 13 was exhausted, California ranked 49 among the 50 states in the proportion of personal income spent on education. Because Californians are relatively wealthy the state slipped only to 31st place in total expenditures per pupil, still well below the national average. At the same time, the state rose from well below average to 5th place in the proportion of all educational costs provided by the state.

In 1983 the California state legislature adopted S.B. 813, an omnibus educational reform package providing substantial new money for schools and mandating major changes in a wide variety of policy domains. Teacher quality was clearly important to the framers of this reform effort.

TEACHER COMPENSATION

One provision of S.B. 813 seeks better teachers through a program of direct incentives to school districts to raise starting salaries to \$18 000 per year. The incentives provided are powerful enough, and the gap between the new minimum and existing salary schedules small

enough, to enable most districts to comply. The new money does not, however, provide for comparable salary increases for more experienced teachers.

Three other substantial changes in teacher compensation embodied in S.B. 813 contribute to increasing the quantity as well as the quality of teaching. First, salary money was offered to districts willing to extend the school year for up to five days. Unlike Utah's career ladder program, however, California's extended work year adds instructional time rather than creating non-instructional duties for teachers. A second major source of additional income for teachers was the funding of summer schools which had been virtually eliminated in the post-Proposition 13 retrenchment period. While summer school is not, strictly speaking, a teacher salary adjustment, the bulk of the costs are in the form of teacher salaries. A third provision of S.B. 813 links compensation to changes in teacher work roles. That provision created a "mentor teacher" program enabling up to 5 percent of the state's teachers to earn as much as \$4 000 additional income if they are selected as mentors.

WORK ROLE DEFINITION

A substantial step toward redefinition of the teaching work role in California was taken with the creation of mentor teachers. The primary aim of the legislation, as indicated by the title of the program, is to enable outstanding teachers to provide guidance and counsel to new or less able teachers. Mentors must be selected on the basis of meritorious performance and are appointed for up to three years. In many districts, however, mentor teachers have little or no responsibility for direct supervision of other teachers. In these districts, mentors are more likely to have curriculum or program development responsibilities.

The legislature also created, with financial assistance from a private foundation, a blue-ribbon Commission on the Teaching Profession. A recently released report from this Commission pro-

poses sweeping reforms in teacher compensation, training and work role definitions.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION OF TEACHERS

One of the most active areas of policy development in California is in higher expectations of school managers to impact teacher performance. State law requires that the competency of school site administrators to supervise and evaluate teachers be certified every two years. While no specific training programs for this certification have been developed, the State Department of Education authorized the creation of 14 Administrative Training Centers (ATCs) located in county school offices throughout the state. A newly created California Leadership Academy is to provide training programs and specify the training priorities for these ATCs.

These major changes in administrative training and job responsibility are accompanied by substantial changes in the requirements for administrative services credentials. Under new regulations, administrative credentialing is a two stage process. The first credential is required for entry into administrative service; the second must be acquired within five years. Altogether, administrative credential candidates must secure 48 semester hours of graduate level training beyond their teaching certificate.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

California has a strong history of professional staff development for teachers. Initially passed as A.B. 551 in 1975, the major vehicle for staff development today is a series of 15 Teacher Education and Computer (TEC) Centers distributed across the state. The TEC Centers have major responsibility for planning and supporting staff development programs. The program emphasis is primarily on mathematics, science and computer literacy. Teachers have a major voice in

planning the programs and constitute at least 50 percent of the policy board for each TEC Center.

TEACHER TESTING

California has a strong teacher testing policy. The primary test, the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) is required of every new teacher, whether trained in California or entering the system from out of state. The test, as its name implies, is of basic skills rather than professional knowledge. Credential candidates must pass each of the three parts — reading, writing and computation. Out of state teachers get one year to pass the test. The test is also required of long-term substitute teachers and must be taken by experienced teachers if they change teaching assignments.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

It has been nearly 15 years since California made a major revision in its basic teacher credentialing law. Modest changes have been enacted during the ensuing years, but the basic framework created by the Ryan Act remains in effect. This framework calls for strong disciplinary training of teachers with schools of education limited to providing limited instruction in curriculum, child development and teaching methods, along with substantial supervision of practice teaching conducted within a competency-based instructional format. There have been some minor political tussles over whether credentialing should be a function of the California Superintendent of Public Instruction or should remain in

the hands of the currently independent Commission on Teacher Credentialing. With the work of the Commission on the Teaching Profession just released it is quite likely that a general overhaul of the credentialing process will be undertaken within the next year or two.

WORKER ORGANIZATION

California's collective bargaining law for teachers is now ten years old. S.B. 160 (1975) provides teachers with the right to exclusive representation and formal bargaining, though it is silent on the question of strikes. While there is no clear evidence that unionization has brought the improvements in teaching expected by its proponents, it has significantly altered working relationships between teachers and administrators. Districts are far from powerless to resist teacher demands, however. Teacher real income has fallen during the last ten years. Some statutory rights regarding discipline, transfer and lay-off have been lost.

Nevertheless, teacher organizations in California are strong and play a major role in shaping teaching reform policies. The Commission on the Teaching Profession urged reconsideration of the overall framework for teacher organization. Their recommendations received favorable comment from American Federation of Teachers president Albert Shanker.

STRENGTHENING SCHOOL CULTURES

Beginning with an Early Childhood Education (ECE) program developed in the 1960s, California policymakers have

consistently encouraged the creation of citizen advisory bodies with substantial power to plan and control program changes at the school site level. The advisory process begun under ECE expanded during the 1970s into a comprehensive School Improvement Program. School Site Councils representative of teachers (at least 50 percent), parents, administrators and students exist to identify and plan for a broad range of programmatic improvements though it is not clear that substantial improvements in school climate and performance occurred. Many school districts use less formal avenues for strengthening cultural bonds.

IN SUM

California policymakers are extraordinarily active in pursuing teacher quality and performance improvement. Over the last decade they enacted major programs in all but one of the eight strategic domains available to them. And that one — pre-service training for teaching credentials — is likely to receive major attention in the next year or so.

Over the last decade attention in California has shifted away from credential reform, staff development, participatory management and teacher organization — policies to affect teachers' subjective thinking processes. Recent actions give greater attention to strong supervision, competency testing and improved compensation — policies that alter the objective conditions of teaching work. The report of the Commission on the Teaching Profession may shift attention once again to the problems of orientation and attitude. ■



Improving Teacher Quality in Arizona

Robert T. Stout
and
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As in other states, the development of policies to secure and support high quality teaching is a matter of great concern to Arizona policymakers. Substantial changes have been made in teacher selection, training and supervision systems, and special attention is focused on developing new ways to compensate teachers, monitor the adequacy of their preparation, and evaluate their actual job performance. A wide range of new policy proposals are currently under discussion which would make further changes.

Existing and proposed policies are best understood in terms of eight basic policy options: 1) compensation, 2) management and supervision, 3) pre-service training and certification, 4) testing and screening, 5) changing teacher job definitions, 6) worker organizations, 7) professional development, and 8) school culture improvement. The choice among these options depends on what assumptions are made about how best to influence the overall quality of teacher work performance.

TEACHER COMPENSATION

A pilot program for merit pay and career ladders was adopted in Arizona two years ago and a joint legislative committee recently held hearings to study the whole issue of teacher compensation. Legislative leaders are reluctant to consider a general increase in teacher salaries unless teachers are willing to accept greater responsibility and closer supervision in exchange. The average starting salary in Arizona is currently about \$16,900 — substantially above the national average of \$14,500. Specific strategies for increasing teacher salaries, such as less rigid tenure laws, career ladders and merit pay have not inspired much enthusiasm. Policymakers are looking for indications that teachers are willing to be held financially accountable for their actions. In the immediate

future, general salary increases of any magnitude seem unlikely.

STRENGTHENED SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT

Closer and more direct supervision of teachers is an important element in recent Arizona initiatives dealing with two issues. The first is to strengthen and standardize teacher evaluation procedures and criteria. Teachers are to be evaluated by qualified evaluators who have sufficient training to reliably use selected evaluation instruments. Most districts are using some modification of the "Essential Elements of Effective Instruction" for evaluation. Probationary teachers are to be evaluated twice a year; continuing teachers annually. Areas of improvement are to be noted and a plan for improvement developed. Teachers may be put on notice of intent to terminate and termination may occur based on unsatisfactory performance.

The second supervision initiative is the establishment of a Principal's Academy. The program is two weeks long, occurs in the summer, is administered by an employee of the Arizona Department of Education, and is planned by a group of school administrators. The Academy is intended to be self-supporting through fees. Legislative leaders want training to emphasize skills necessary for improving instruction.

The Arizona School Administrators organization (ASA, Inc.) attempted to mount a parallel academy for superintendents, but they were not able to generate enough interest. During 1985-86, the ASA, Inc. is sponsoring a series of topical leadership conferences instead. In addition, ASA, Inc., in cooperation with some school districts and three state universities, established a Principal Assessment Center.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Policy activity related to teacher training and certification is largely the work of the Arizona State Department of Education, with the legislature adopt-

ing a posture of "If you do not do something, we will." Recent action dates from the work of a 1978 Blue Ribbon Task Force convened by the State Superintendent. The report argued for competency-based certification and the creation of a certification panel independent of the State Board of Education. In 1979 the State Board created the Professional Standards and Certification Advisory Committee which developed lists of the skills all newly certified teachers are expected to have mastered during preparation. Universities are expected to show that programs assure mastery of the required skills as a condition of approval.

The State Board also created a pilot Teacher Residency Program to support the development of teacher skills during the first two years of employment. It was discontinued after two years. The subject of teacher preparation continues to receive a lot of attention, but no consensus has yet been reached about how to proceed with reforms in this area.

TESTING AND SCREENING

In Arizona, teacher testing policy is very closely associated with pre-service training and certification. In 1980 the legislature mandated that all teacher training candidates pass an examination covering "reading, grammar and mathematics." The State Board of Education and the Board of Regents for the Universities were given joint responsibility to implement this Pre-Professional Skills Test, which must be passed before a candidate can enter an approved teacher training program. The State Board also administers a Professional Skills Test which is given after training but prior to certification.

TEACHER JOB REDEFINITION

State activity in this area is limited to a pilot Career Ladder program. At present there are seven approved pilot school districts. They receive some state funds and, in return, must show evidence that career teachers are not being paid according to the traditional salary sched-

ule, that teachers have been consulted in planning, and that career teachers are making special contributions to educational improvement in the district. If evaluation of these pilot programs is positive, some model or models may be encouraged. The legislature is most likely to grant career ladder districts some flexibility in taxing authority to support their programs; there is little evidence that substantial state funds will be provided.

WORKER ORGANIZATION

Arizona is a right to work state. No statutory provision exists for teachers to organize or bargain collectively. Teacher organizations across the state are fairly strong, however, and various forms of negotiation between teacher groups and school boards do occur. They are sharply circumscribed by a 1971 Arizona Supreme Court decision which voided a Scottsdale school district contract on the grounds that the district had no authority to enter into binding agreements with the teacher organization. There is almost no chance that this situation will change substantially in the near future. What legislation has been introduced on this topic has generally been directed toward making it harder rather than easier for teacher organizations to bargain for their members.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Traditionally, Arizona has left professional development of teachers

almost entirely to local school districts. Some sporadic efforts have been made to create training for special education or vocational subject teachers, but no long term programs are operating. Recently some vocational education money was used by the State Department to create a School Improvement Program. The new program will offer staff development services to school districts and groups of teachers in a wide variety of areas.

SCHOOL CULTURE IMPROVEMENT

Activity in this area is almost entirely the responsibility of local school districts. A number of districts have invested in training teachers in Essential Elements of Effective Instruction, Assertive Discipline, Clinical Supervision and incorporation of various elements of effective schools research into school programs. The new School Improvement Program, mentioned above as a staff development program, may provide a basis for state level involvement in this policy domain. So far, however, there is no indication that state level decisionmakers see this as an issue for their attention.

IN SUM

Arizona policymakers are giving primary attention to teacher compensation and supervision. Substantial attention is also focused on competency testing and, to a lesser extent, redefinition of teacher work roles. Pre-service training is a matter of considerable inter-

est, but the testing strategy is getting at least as much attention as efforts to specify the content or process of training. State level policymakers have left staff development and school culture improvement almost entirely to local district initiative. They have positively rejected the worker organization strategy as a legitimate vehicle for improvement of teacher quality.

State level initiatives in Arizona concentrate on controlling the external conditions of teacher recruitment and work performance rather than seeking to directly alter teacher thinking or attitudes. The overall strategy for teacher quality improvement in this state is configured as follows.

- Create tough standards for admission to teacher preparation programs
- Scrutinize the preparation process
- Use careful hiring by local districts in conjunction with performance based pay to select and reward high performing teachers.
- Provide close supervision to monitor teacher performance.
- Provide for tough evaluation, and prevent job security policies from interfering with dismissal of poor teachers.
- Encourage local school districts to train teachers and incorporate elements of effective schools research. ■

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